



Korea International School

Orientation Manual



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Welcome to Korea is offered to provide **KIS** faculty, especially new members arriving from abroad, with some insights of what to expect upon arrival in Seoul, Korea.

Even if you are an experienced expatriate, the information that follows is often specific to Korea and therefore should be beneficial. Included are some helpful hints and websites that should assist you in your preparations before you come and after you arrive. Welcome to the **KIS** community!

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History of Seoul



The fifth largest city in the world, the Seoul metropolis has a population of about 11 million and is the center for economy, finance, the arts and culture. Seoul is known to be one of the safest places to travel in with its low crime rate. There is a blend of old and new in Seoul with the modern high-rises and trendy shops mixed in with ancient temples and palaces. Shopping is not a problem with the many department stores and street shops located around the city. People are very sociable and kind to visitors in Seoul. You will always see people in groups laughing and walking along the streets.

Although English is taught in school, most Koreans have problems with pronunciation. Since they can read English very well, it's a good idea to write down questions. The public transportation in Seoul is excellent and will take you to almost any place you need to go whether it's by taxi, bus, or subway. Traffic congestion is a big problem in Seoul, so the quickest way of getting around Seoul is generally by subway.

The Han River flows through the center of Seoul. Encircling the city are rocky mountains which makes Seoul blend nature and modernization beautifully. The center of Seoul has a mountain called Namsan, which has a tower on top that enables one to see almost all of the city on a clear day.

Temperatures in Seoul are clearly defined by the four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Autumn is the best time to visit Seoul since the temperatures are mild and the sky is clear. Seoul has four palaces from the Chosun Dynasty. The Chosun Dynasty determined that Seoul was to be the capital of the Korean Peninsula in 1394. It remained the capital of the entire peninsula throughout the Chosun Dynasty up to the Korean War. During the Korean War, Seoul was almost totally destroyed. From 1960-1970, there was a tremendous effort to rebuild the city. Rapid economic growth was evident and by 1988, Seoul was home to the Olympics which brought to the world's attention that it was one of the major cities in Asia.

History of Korea International School

On February 27, 1999, the Korean Ministry of Education authorized the establishment of Korea International School (KIS). KIS is the manifestation of Y.B.Min's recognition of the need for a high quality, university preparatory education in which English is the medium of instruction.

The vision began to become a reality on August 21, 2000, when KIS opened its doors to students in Kindergarten through Grade 6. Following the successful inauguration of the K-6 program in 2000-01, Grades 7 and 8 were added in the 2001-02 school year. Grades 9-12 were added in 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06 and our first class of eight seniors graduated in May 2006. A significant development in the life of our school was the opening of our new campus, in the Pangyo/Bundang area, south of Seoul in August 2006. Over 45 million US dollars was invested for this state of the art facility.

A remodeled portion of our Gaepo Campus in Gangnam reopened to house our brand new Early Years program for three, four, five, and six year old children. Daily, our vision, shared by a dedicated international faculty and staff, becomes reality. KIS's goal is to earn its reputation among students, parents, and the international education community as a premier academy, throughout the world.

We at KIS are proud of our history and the milestones we have already reached. We look forward to the fulfillment of our potential, and our pledge to achieve our goals. We welcome you to join in the KIS experience and become a part of our community and history.



Moving from your old home to your New Home

Getting your Visa

Once you send the required documents to us by the end of April, KIS Faculty Operation Support Team (FOST) staff will go to the immigration office and submit the application for visa. After 3~4 weeks, the "Visa Issuance Number" will be issued, and it will be forwarded to you via e-mail. With that Visa Issuance Number and other documents, you should go to the nearest Korean Consulate or Embassy and submit an application form. If it is difficult to go in person, you can mail, using carriers like DHL or UPS, your passport, Certificate of Visa Issuance Number (this will be sent to you via DHL upon your request), and check to the Korean Consulate (Please check with the consulate for the exact amount) in a self-addressed envelope. We recommend going in person even if it is not convenient because this mailing option can take up to a month for you to get your passport back with the E-7 visa. The consulate/embassy will give you the E-7 visa usually within 3 days, so you may have to come back a couple of days later depends on circumstance of the consulates. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you call the consulate prior to your visit and check that whether you have to come back or not.

Time line for documents

Documents required by March 15

- original signed intent contract
- resume
- copy of recommendation letter if available
- copy of passport(s) photo page for entire family
- copy of diploma
- copy of teaching certificate credential

Documents required by April 30

- Apostiled diploma
- Apostiled criminal record (by FBI for US Citz) / (RCMP for Canadian Citz) other nationals (Teachers from other nationalities other than US/Canada please contact the department of foreign affairs in your country)
- 3 passport type color photos
- General Medical Health Form (provided by Korean Immigration office)
- Certificate of Credible Coverage - CCC from current employer to state that you have current insurance coverage

You will need the following documents when you go to the Korean consulate:

- Visa Issuance Number (KIS will send you after we process your visa)
- Two Passport type color photos.
- Valid Passport (valid through at least next 6 months)
- Cash (amount depends on the consulates)

Korean consulates in countries other than the US or Canada may ask for 'Certificate of Visa Issuance Number.' Please call them prior to your visit and ask whether they require such documents. Upon the request, KIS will fax the document either directly to the teacher or the consulate.



Documents needed for Visa Processing

You will need to send the New Faculty Information Sheet and a copy of signed contract by March 15th. The remaining documents are due by the first week of May 2011. Please use carriers like DHL, FedEx, or UPS, and we recommend you keep a copy of your tracking number.

1. The Original Signed Cover Page of the Contract
2. The New Faculty Information Form
3. A COPY of your teaching certificate or credential
4. A COPY of your passport photo page
5. Apostilled copy of Diploma of your highest degree.
(for US: http://apostille.us/new_web/PD_BC.shtml/ /for Canada www.redsealnotary.com for the UK www.apostilles.org)
6. 3 Passport type color photos
7. A COPY of your current resume showing your current place of employment.
8. General Medical Health Form (Basic health examination, including blood test and urine test will be required upon arrival due to the Korean Immigration Office regulation)
9. Apostilled Criminal Record History (by FBI for US Citizen/ RCMP for Canadian Citizen)
10. Certificate of Credible Coverage (CCC) from your insurance company or a letter or document from your carrier that states the beginning and ending dates of your coverage
11. Copies of your recommendation letters, if available.

Dealing with Missing Documents

The Apostilled copy of your diploma, a passport copy, the original signed cover page of the contract, a copy of your teaching credential, resume, general medical health form, apostilled criminal record check, and three photos are essential for the visa process. Without any one of these, the immigration office will not accept the application. Thus these eight (8) documents are to be sent to KIS by the due date. You can send other documents (CCC form, recommendation letters) later.

Arranging Flights

On the 'New Faculty Information Sheet' which you are required to send to us, you should specify the desired date, time, and departing city. According to the information on that sheet, FOST will reserve your flight and send the e-tickets to you. The due date for submitting this sheet is March 15th, and you will receive the tickets by the end of May.

Transporting Personal Belongings to Korea

There are several ways to send your belongings over to Korea. Many teachers send their things via regular postal service, by air and by ship. To ship by air is fairly expensive, but it guarantees the arrival dates. To ship by land (ship) is less expensive, but it takes a lot longer (up to 2 months) and the arrival date is not guaranteed. Please note that this surface mail is not offered in the U.S. anymore. For those who want to ship their belongings from the U.S., they need to use air mail. Please make sure to have your personal belongings arrive in Korea when you are about to arrive. When the goods go through the Korean Customs, only the owner can pick those up. If you do not arrive within a few days, the shipment will be stored in the Customs storage room, and you will be responsible for the storage fee. Another alternative is to bring stuff with you. It can be difficult depends on how much stuff you have, but it is the cheapest way. You will need to pay the over weight baggage penalty (check the airline regulation on websites), but that is still a lot cheaper than shipping cost. And at the airport, Faculty Support Team staff will help you load/unload.

Where to Mail Items

Please send your things to KIS at the address below, not to your apartment. We will get those parcels and store them in our storage room designated for teachers' belongings. The Faculty Support Team will assist you in bringing the boxes to your apartment upon your arrival. In case of family or friends wanting to send you items, please follow the same procedures.

On some occasions, the parcels get delayed at Korea Customs. And in that case, only the sender can pick up those parcels, so the parcels stay at their storage room until you arrive in Korea. Please try not to send your belongings too early. We recommend getting an estimate of how long it takes for parcels to get to Korea from wherever you are so that you can ship your belongings in a timely manner. You will be responsible for the storage fee in case a parcel stays in customs.

Shipping Address

Your Name
Korea International School
373-6 Baekhyeon-dong, Bundang-gu Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, 463-420 Korea

Arrival at Incheon International Airport

When you come out of the gate, one of our Faculty Operation Support Team staff will be waiting for you holding a KIS sign that has your name on it. Even if you cannot locate the KIS sign, do not worry; our staff will be watching for you also and will come to you. You will be given your relocation allowance (\$1,200 for single, \$2,000 for teaching couple, and \$2,300 for teaching couples with children) at the airport. The relocation allowance will be given in US dollars and Korean Won. Then you will be taken directly to your apartment from the airport. In the apartment, all the household items and hospitality kit should be in place as well as a welcome package that contains basic information about your address, phone number, a \$10 phone card, the shuttle bus route to school from your apartment, a neighborhood map, appliance manuals, and so on.

In case of a flight delay or cancellation, you need to contact us ASAP, so that we can arrange to pick you up. You will be given the cellular phone number of Lisa Kang, Faculty Operation Support Team Manager (FOST). Please give Lisa a call when your flight is delayed more than a couple of hours or canceled. She will make an alternative arrangement for your pick up.

Bringing a family pet

If you are planning to bring your pet(s) with you, please let us know as soon as possible. There are some apartments that do not allow pets so you will need to be assigned housing accordingly. Advance planning regarding pets is of the utmost importance.

Your pets should get the required vaccinations at least 30 days before entering Korea. If the pet enters Korea after 30 days from the date of the rabies vaccination, and no health problems are found upon inspection, then no quarantine confinement is required. You should present the quarantine certificate or rabies vaccination certificate issued by a quarantine authority or Veterinarian. Following is the National Veterinary Research & Quarantine Service website.

<http://www.nvrqs.go.kr/English/> or
http://www.nvrqs.go.kr/eng/rese_quarantine_02.asp?pageNumber=3-0

In these sites, you will find all the information you will need. Also, please check the airline regulations about boarding with pets. Depending on the weight, your pet might have to stay in the luggage area during the flight



Internet / TV

Internet / TV cable will not be available upon your arrival. In order to install internet service, we will need a computer to hook up. Thus installing internet will be offered after your arrival. Please specify which option you would like to get and let Faculty Support Team staff know. The internet / TV cable service will be installed as soon as possible. (It might take a couple of days depending on the circumstances of the service company.) Internet will be available at the school immediately. All housing will have electricity, water, and gas turned on prior to the arrival of the faculty.

New Faculty Orientation

The exact schedule for new faculty orientation differs from year to year, but it starts from July 28th . Mr. Steve Cathers will send you the details. Breakfast will be provided throughout the orientation. General school rules and regulations, curriculum, insurance, living in Korea, and other helpful topics will be addressed. A trip to COSTCO and the bank will be offered as well.

Shuttle buses will be offered for your pick up and drop off. The bus schedule and route information will be in your welcome package.

Opening a Bank Account

During the orientation, Faculty Operation Support Team will take teachers to bank and open a Dollar and a Won account. KIS has an exclusive relationship with one bank and your pay will be deposited directly into that bank account. You will need to bring your passport. After approximately 10 days, you will receive the bank statement book and check card (like debit card). When you use this debit card, money will be deducted from your Korean Won account, not the US dollar account.

Getting a cellular phone

You must obtain an Alien Registration Card from the Korean Immigration Office before you can get a cell phone. After you obtain an ARC, then FOST staff will assist you in getting a phone.



What are Social Hosts?

Social Hosts are current KIS teachers who have lived in your specific neighborhood over a year. They will be able to show you around the neighborhood, take you to shopping, and make you feel welcomed. They are the one who have lived there for over a year, so information that comes from them obviously can be very useful. The Faculty Support Team will give your home phone numbers to social host, and they will contact you within a day or two after your arrival.

What happens in case of an emergency?

For life threatening emergencies such as auto accident, fire, and so on, very first person should contact is the business director, Mr. Dan Choi. For any other inquiries, please contact FOST manager Lisa Kang and/or the team members. Cellular phone numbers of key KIS business staff will be provided to you.

Housing and Utilities

Under normal circumstances, for teachers hired outside of Korea, your housing is provided by KIS as part of your contractual agreement. Normally, teachers live in the general vicinity of the campus and have easy access to public transportation both to and from school and into the various central districts of Seoul. Bundang-gu is a relatively new residential and business district of Seoul, south of the Han River, and is considered one of the more sophisticated and up-and-coming areas in Seoul. Generally speaking teachers live in clusters in the same communities, if not the same buildings. Mountains surround Seoul and escaping the city is easily accomplished via public transportation. One small, but popular hiking area is within easy walking distance of the school (Daemon-san).

Apartments come equipped with the basics, courtesy of KIS. Every apartment comes equipped with a bed, sofa, dresser, wardrobe (may be built in), stove top burner, microwave and toaster. Other items may be provided according to your contract. Check out these items after getting settled in. If one of these items does not seem to be in good working condition, notify your administrator so he or she can work with the business office to resolve the problem. Please be considerate of and to the Koreans working in the business office. The FOST will assist you in resolving any issues you have with the equipment in your apartment. The business office will arrange utility hookups for you (but it will be your responsibility to make the bill payments - easy enough to accomplish). Again, if you have any difficulties, work through your administrator to resolve them.

Cable Bill ○

2010년 8월 8일자		KT 수납통지서 (정보차리용)		전자납부가능	
금 액	33,570원	표준OCR	710400011	납부일	2010. 08. 25
서비스번호	0031-0261-2219	번호	710400011	납부금액	33570 원
고객명	정대식	번호	10070752731201008107	납부금액	33570 원
상품명	일반전화				
영세서번호	10070752731				
이용기간	2010. 7. 1 - 7. 31				
납기일	2010. 8. 25				
위 금액의 수납을 개해합니다					
● 납부할 때는 KT 직 직사내로 전화결제 또는 우체국, 농협, 수협, 신한은행, 국민은행, 신한카드					
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Electric Bill ○

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Gas Bill ○

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4,630 원			

Drinking the Water

The water supply in Seoul has been deemed safe to drink. If you would like to have bottled water in your apartment. You can arrange to have large bottles of distilled water delivered to your apartment and the KIS business office has assisted teachers with this process in the past. Filters and filtered pitchers are sold at some stores. Read the packages carefully as they may filter out microbes but not metals or other toxic substances.

Cooking with Gas

Apartments in Seoul are equipped with gas or electric burners, gas being the more common. Ovens are uncommon, but most of the family apartments have them. Teachers who do not have ovens often purchase toaster ovens, which can perform many of the same functions.

Laundry

All apartments are assigned with washing machines. Some family apartments also have a dryer. Additionally, there is a laundry room located on the Pangyo campus which has 4 western style washing machines and dryers. This is available to the KIS staff 6 days week.

Electricity

Both 110- and 220-volt alternating current (60 Hz) outlets are used in Korea. Outlets are usually labeled in watts, and KVA signifies one kilowatt (1,000 watts). In Seoul, 220 is the norm. Across the US, 110 is the standard, so if you bring many US made electrical appliances with you to Korea and they don't have a converter built in, you will need a transformer when you arrive. One will be supplied by the school. Most of the typical kitchen appliances you are accustomed to are also available.

Paying the Bills

Many bills can also be set up for auto-payment from your bank account. We also currently have an ATM in place on campus where you can pay your bills quickly. This is an ATM use not available in most countries. Another option is to pay your bills monthly at your bank or main post offices. The FOST will show first time users the proper way to pay bills via the ATM.

Technology for the Home

Technology is widely available for the home. Koreans have a legitimate claim to be the most widely wired, broadband-using country in the world. Cable TV and Internet hook-ups are not a problem and are reasonably priced.

Banking and Currency

Korean currency is called Won and is listed as KRW in the exchange markets and currency tables normally found in the business section of major newspapers both home and abroad.

Exchange Rate

The Korean exchange rate is not fixed; in other words, it fluctuates throughout the day, depending on the global currency market. It is freely convertible. In general, the exchange rate does not fluctuate widely in relation to the US dollar. To learn the exchange rate, visit one of the government websites or one of the on-line English language exchange sites. It is a good idea to carry a pocket-sized calculator with you while shopping until you become accustomed to the local currency. Some calculators contain a currency conversion function built into them. Some of the cell phones you can buy also have calculators built into them. The International Herald Tribune has an easy-to-use currency converter. <http://www.ihb.com/cgi-bin/cgconvert.cgi>

Currency

Paper money comes in 1,000, 5,000, 10,000 and 50,000 won bills; coins in increments of 10, 50, 100, and 500. (To give you an idea, 10,000 Won is currently is slightly less than, US \$10.00). To get larger paper denominations you can print checks from ATM machines, which come in 100,000 won denominations and can be used anywhere without identification just like regular paper money.





Bank Accounts and ATMs

There are no restrictions for foreigners who wish to open a bank account. Some banks have application forms in English. KIS will open an account for you and it is into that account that they will deposit both the Korean Won and US dollar portions of your salary. You will be issued an ATM card for this account. Unless you have other specific banking needs, this account, in conjunction with the one you maintain at your home of record, should be sufficient.

ATMs at most banks now generally offer an English menu option. Be careful when withdrawing cash, since until such time as larger denominations are available, ATMs often query you regarding how many 10,000 won bills you would like to receive, should you wish to withdraw an amount different from the preprogrammed selections. For example, if you answer 50, you might very well be withdrawing 50 - 10,000 won bills, or 500,000 won (nearly US \$500). Remember to ask for money in terms of 10,000 won increments when using such ATMs. Most ATMs limit the daily withdrawal amount, so if you need a large amount of cash, you need to plan on doing so in person at the bank during banking hours or over a period of a number of days from the ATMs.

There are also international or "Global" ATMs that will honor your home bank card providing the bank that provided it is a member of one of the international webs listed on the ATM (PLUS, Cirrus, Interlink, etc.). Credit cards affiliated with one of these webs can also be used to withdraw money from international ATMs providing you established a PIN number for such purpose with your credit card provider.

하나은행				
년월일	적요	지급금액	예입금액	잔액
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20100518	하나카드	1,016.552	하나카드대금	*558.143 026
20100518	하나카드비씨체크카드사액	2,440		*560.583 140
20100520	통장요금	73.510	기남방송	*487.073 347
20100523	대체	50,000	현금	*437.073 347
20100528	대체	101,300	청호컴넷-지급	*335.773 206
20100528	대체	1,092.174	환전대입	*1,427.947 347
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20100609	대체	1,000,000	우체:강남구	*1,327.547 198
20100609	ATM	100,000	현금	*1,227.547 198
20100610	대체	101,200	006	*1,126.347 497
20100611	대체	석판테일러	2,466.780	*3,593.127 347
20100611	대체	환전대입		



Credit Cards and Traveler's Checks

Major credit cards are taken in larger stores, restaurants, travel agencies, hotels, government offices, etc. Some smaller stores take them while others do not. Traveler's checks are widely accepted.

Cash Exchange

Foreign exchange windows are commonly available in the larger Korean bank branches and there are plenty of them. It is best to avoid exchanging money at airports, that have poor rates, and in the black market, which is illegal. Incheon International Airport does have an easy-to-use exchange windows available.

Living in Korea

Language

Don't worry; you can get by with absolutely no Korean language skills. Don't expect the average Korean to speak English; however, many Koreans have studied English for years in the public school system, after-school institutes, travel abroad, and university. A number of younger Koreans have traveled internationally and studied abroad. Employees at the larger hotels, department stores, restaurants, tourist destinations, etc. often get hired in part because of their English qualifications. If, on the other hand, you are in a traditional market or small shop or restaurant, you may find yourself pantomiming or drawing in the dirt. It is a good idea to learn a few simple words and phrases as soon as you can. The words for bathroom, excuse me, thank you, hello and good-bye often are good first words to learn. It wouldn't be a bad idea to start learning the Korean alphabet. The ability to read Korean words can be helpful while traveling through the country. Needless to say, the more Korean you are willing to learn, the easier life gets and the greater your experiences will be. Additionally, "locals" in any country will develop a lot more respect for a visitor who learns a little of the language and shows a sincere interest in their culture than someone who does not. However you can get by in Seoul with English alone and still enjoy your experiences.



Korean Alphabet

Consonants

ㄱ ㅋ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㄴ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅇ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ
g,k n d,t r,l m b,p s ng j ch k t p h

↑
silent in initial position

ㄲ ㄸ ㅃ ㅆ ㅈ

kk tt pp ss jj

Vowels

ㅏ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ ㅣ
a ya eo yeo o yo u yu eu i
father saw home moon put meet

ㅐ ㅒ ㅔ ㅖ ㅘ ㅙ ㅚ ㅜ ㅞ ㅟ ㅢ
ae yae e ye wa wae oe wo we wi ui
hand set wet

Revised Romanization.

Pronunciations shown here are only rough approximations.



For those of you wishing to study Korean there are a number of institutions and organizations that provide free lessons. Quality will vary, so if you are not happy with one, try another. Paid Korean courses are also available at universities and other institutes. It is not difficult to find a "conversation partner" or to join language exchanges.

Additionally, you are able to take courses through the parent company of Korea International School at a discounted rate. These class schedules range between 3 to 5 days a week in the evenings. If you are interested in this, please speak with a member of the Korean business staff for more information.

Realize that when Korean words and names are translated into written English, there is more than one system for doing this. Therefore, you may find (the school location) Gaepo-dong as Kaepo-dong. Don't let this frustrate you as it soon becomes apparent which combinations of English letters are substituted for others during the translation process. Also, personal Korean names are listed last and surnames first.

Climate

The climate of Korea is characterized by four distinct traditional seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The contrast between winter and summer is striking. Winter can be bitterly cold and dry and is influenced primarily by the Siberian air mass, while summer is hot and humid due to the maritime pacific high. The transitional seasons of spring and autumn are sunny and generally dry and are the favorite seasons for many staff. Temperatures of all seasons are somewhat lower than those at the corresponding latitudes in other continents, such as North America or Western Europe. Temperatures in Seoul, which is at the latitude of Richmond, Va., are similar to those in New York, which is located 500 kilometers (300 miles) farther north than the latitude of Seoul. August is the hottest month with temperatures reaching into the 90s accompanied by high humidity. January is the coldest month with the temperatures falling well below freezing. Annual precipitation is about 1,500mm in the central region. More than a half of the total rainfall amount is concentrated in summer, while precipitation in winter is less than 10% of the total precipitation.

Time Zone

Korea is 13 hours (summer) or 14 hours (winter) ahead of Eastern Standard Time or GMT plus 9 hours.

Safety

Crime is not as major a factor living in Seoul or Korea as it can be in most other areas of the world, however, crime exists. Taking the usual approaches to minimize any possibility of your being involved in a crime is the best advice that can be offered including: locking your doors while home or away; not giving out your personal information to people who you are not familiar with, avoid traveling alone late at night or with a stranger offering you a ride, especially if you are a female; avoid flashing large amounts of cash, let someone know where, when and for how long you will be gone when traveling abroad or going on excursions in Korea.

Protests are not uncommon in Korea, especially in Seoul where there is a large number of universities and labor and political organizations. Protests are best avoided. Information regarding protests can be obtained through newspapers and radio and TV stations, AFN (Armed Forces Network) and the US Embassy being the most reliable sources in English. Anyone, regardless of nationality, can sign up with the US Embassy's Warden System to receive electronically delivered notices of planned protests and other security information regarding Seoul and the local region. This is recommended.

Medical

There are a number of hospitals, clinics, and private medical offices that will cater to foreigners in Seoul and throughout Korea. Located not far from the school is Samsung hospital. KIS business staff will be made available to accompany foreign staff to provide translation or to help make appointments and other arrangements. "Western" medicine is practiced in Korea, as is "Eastern" medicine. Pharmacies are widely available. It is not unusual to find doctors or pharmacists that were trained in the US in English.

Do not expect to find pharmaceuticals or over-the-counter cold and flu remedies, painkillers, etc. in the convenience stores or supermarkets. In Korea, as typical of Confucian societies, you are expected to go the local pharmacy, explain your problem (good luck in English... and hope that you don't have to pantomime a personal one), and defer to the decision of the elder, more-wise-in-the-ways-of-medicine-than-you pharmacist behind the counter. The good news is, pharmacists here will give you a number of medicines that you would have to normally first go to the doctor in the US. When pharmacists will not give you an item, then you need to go to the doctor to get a prescription.

If you are currently taking long-term prescription medications you need to discuss with your doctor the possibility of bringing an extended supply with you. Be sure to bring a doctor's note explaining your need for medication quantities for the customs agent at the airport. Look into the possibility of ordering via the Internet. The Korean government websites listed above should provide information and links regarding any regulations that pertain to bringing such medications across their border and the names of English speaking doctors available in Seoul.

Religion and Churches

"Counting souls in Korea is hardly an exact science - many people see nothing contradictory in professing to adhere to several faiths at once. For what it's worth, statistically about half of all South Koreans profess to be religious skeptics. The other half is mostly Buddhist and Christian, with a smattering of Confucianism and Shamanism." Not to fear! There are a number of English speaking services available in Seoul and in the Bundang area. For a list of these, take out the Lonely Planet travel guide that you have by now bought and scan through the Facts about Seoul - Religion section, from which was just quoted. Other staff will also share local knowledge in this area if asked.

Society and Culture

To begin to understand Korean culture it is advised to read a little about Confucianism. Korea is often described as more Confucian than present-day China, where Confucianism originated. In one sentence, Confucianism creates order in society through the management of relationships according to the "Five Relationships" between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, old and young and between friends. It is not uncommon for the first question asked of you, especially from an older Korean, despite the obvious, is your age. Until one of these five relationships is established between you and a traditionally minded Korean, you are often considered and treated as a non-entity. The Korean language requires that you be categorized into one of these groups so that you can be addressed accordingly. Generally speaking, if you are not in one of these relationships you may find yourself treated as if you did not exist. Be sure to bring an open mind before arriving and strive to understand Korean relationships in light of this Confucian perspective. The other two most common questions asked, not necessarily in this order, are "How do you like Korea?" (Koreans are proud) and "Where are you from?"

Many establishments and almost all traditional hotels and homes, especially those with tatami - style mats or polished wood floors, will require you to take off your shoes at the door before entering. Thongs (the kind you wear on your feet), flip-flops, and slippers are often provided when this is the case. It is considered rude to walk on such floors with bare feet, so wear (or carry) a pair of socks if you are not otherwise inclined. Laced boots and shoes get old quickly if you frequent such places. You be grateful if you have some slip-on shoes to wear in Korea as you will probably need to remove shoes more than ever before.

More traditional Koreans considered the use of red ink when writing names or personal messages as an insult or threat. Today's youth is not overly concerned with this tradition, but until you establish a good relationship with your students, parents, and friends, use black or blue ink.

Avoid morbid humor

There is nothing funny about death to Koreans and Asians. On the other hand, vulgarity is not as frowned upon in Asia as it is in other parts of the world. Many (widely and loudly played in public spaces) imported pop songs from the USA and Europe contains lyrics that you would not typically hear in the supermarkets, fitness centers, and other public places at home.



Gift giving is a more established social norm in Korea and Asia. It is common to give a small (flowers, candy, etc.) gift to a host when arriving at their home. Insist that they take it. Do not insist that they open it in front of you. At weddings, money is given rather than material gifts, the amount determined according to your relationship with the receiver.

Bowing one's head is less formal, as apposed to bowing at the waist which is quite formal, and is a common form of greeting or paying respect and is often used in lieu of "excuse me" or "sorry" when bumped roughly in a crowd. At times, smiles are offered as apologies, so don't be surprised if a Korean who just about knocked you into the path of an on-coming train smiles at you afterward.

Motion someone to you with your palms down and all fingers to get their attention. To do so with palms up, and especially with one finger, is insulting.

Servers (such as in restaurants, etc.) often wait to be summoned, so don't sit at your table for half and hour fuming about service, which is typically very good. Don't tip; it is not expected.

Major Commercial Holidays

- New Year's Holidays
- Lunar New Year's Day
- Independence Movement Day
- Buddha's Birthday
- Children's Day
- Korean Memorial Day
- Constitution Day
- Independence Day
- Korean Thanksgiving (Chusok) Day
- National Foundation Day
- Christmas Day

Note: All holidays are annually fixed calendar days (meaning that they are not subject to change) with the exception of Lunar New Year and Korean Thanksgiving (Chusok), which vary every year according to the lunar calendar. The two most important Korean holidays are Lunar New Year and Chusok, the latter a rough equivalent to the American holiday of Thanksgiving. Seoul tends to resemble a ghost town during these days as most people return to their ancestral home to visit family and relatives.

Shopping

Shopping for food, groceries and everyday household items are not all that difficult. With few exceptions, you can find everything you need, although it might sometimes involve a little exploration of the markets and shopping venues throughout Seoul. Finding the same wide variety of brand names and specialty items (cheese, wine, cold cuts, or hygiene products, for example) that you might be accustomed to in the US is possible with a little research.





Western style convenience stores, which usually stay open 24 hours a day, proliferate. Larger supermarkets are not as common in Korea as they are in the US, but offer better deals and a wider selection than the local stores. Numerous specialty shops (bakeries, butchers, beverage, pharmacy, etc.) are the norm for Korean shoppers. Small markets selling vegetable, fishes, meats, spices and various other grocery items, not all known in the scientific world as of yet, still can be found on the side streets of Seoul. Mobile fruit and vegetable trucks park on many corners during peak traffic hours (not always conveniently or considerably during the infamous Seoul rush-hour traffic). Another impediment to pedestrian traffic are the prepared food vendors who set up their stalls on the sidewalks, intersections and side streets of most major residential and business areas. Kitchen and other household necessities are widely available in the supermarkets and family run shops throughout every major residential neighborhood. Traditional Korean stoneware is abundant. Farmers come in from the fields and set their produce in the middle of sidewalks and on busy corners and are easy to find! Considering all the inexpensive and convenient small family run restaurants, there are those who have been rumored to have never turned on the burner of their apartment stove, much less spent valuable leisure time attempting to identify some type of unfamiliar meat, vegetable, or insect larva in a market. There is a COSTCO, and the school every week takes different staff members to COSTCO to do some major shopping (if there is interest). They usually do this groups from particular living areas and apartment complexes.

When you have the time, really large market places such as Namdaemun (clothes, food, and just about anything you can think of), Dongdaemin (clothes, this market stays open all night), Hwanghak Flea Market (like a huge garage sale with some of the best bargains in Korea, also sells new and used electronic goods), Yongsan Electronics Market (self explanatory), Technomart (a smaller version of Yongsan Electronics Market), COEX Mall (a mall like any other but larger, conveniently located in Gangnam-gu), Itaewon (a good place for foreign clothes, leather goods, western restaurants and bars, and many other good deals), Insadong (an artsy neighborhood near the palaces, specializing in artsy goods), and many others offer days worth of exploring for bargain shoppers.

Cell phones are an obsession. MP3 players are common. Korea is a leader in flat-screen technology, cell phones, digital cameras, etc. All are common possessions in Korea. Teachers are provided a MacBook Pro with good productivity software to do anything needed. DVD and video formatting is different in Asia, however, USA formatted players are available and if you bring your own computer, DVD's should be compatible. Please note that Internet and e-mail junkies wishing to keep in minute-to-minute contact with their favorite sites, chat rooms, game portals, family, friends, etc. typically have access to a number of inexpensive Internet cafes throughout Seoul, many of which cater to English language users, until such time as they can get their home computer up and running. Cell phones can be purchased new or used with or without English menus. In order to buy one new from one of the service provider's shops you will need to have your passport and Certificate of Alien Registration, which indicates your immigration status (E7 for sponsored teachers in international schools). This indicates to the store selling the phone to you that you are both a legal resident and currently employed. There are shops in Itaewon and elsewhere that manage to sell them without such documentation.

Note: the COEX mall is a subway ride away from where many of the teachers currently live and offers a wide range of shopping and entertainment options, including one of the largest movie theaters in Seoul. Big name US movie titles are often shown here with Korean subtitles. KOEX Mall also houses an aquarium that is shockingly large and entertaining, far beyond what one would find in a U.S. shopping mall.



A word to those of significant stature and/or abnormal proportions, at least by Korean standards, clothing sizes in Korea can be limited. American “L” often translates to “XXL” in Korea and not all stores stock such sizes. There are places, such as Itaewon, that cater to foreigners, however, it is a good idea to come to Korea with a full wardrobe if you are not as slim and fit as the average Korean. While on-line shopping seems convenient, Korea imposes a substantial import tariff and is quite protective of its garment industry, hence Customs will sometimes hold your deliveries for payment on orders exceeding a certain value (approximately equal to 100,000 Won). After charging such tariffs, they may then charge you and additional storage and delivery charges despite the fact that you have already paid to have it sent to you from the on-line vendor. Many of our staff shop for clothing during school breaks in their home countries. Our staff will have many ideas and suggestions for how to get exactly what you need!

If you have a particular fondness for certain brand names (personal hygiene items especially come to mind), it is also a good idea to bring a year’s supply of them along or have a friend or family member prepared to periodically post them to you should you find yourself in low supply.

If you ask a friend or acquaintance from one of the American military bases to purchase items for you through the base commissary or PX system, you are involving both them and yourself in violation of both Korean and American law. The bases take such activities seriously, not only because it is a sensitive issue with local Korean shop owners.

Eat, Drink, and be Merry

“Life in Korea” <http://www.lifeinkorea.com> (“click” on Activities and Events - Food and Drink) and “Korea Net” <http://www.korea.net> (“click” on the Arts/Culture button) are great sites to visit to learn in greater detail about food, drink, entertainment, culture, activities, language, and much more. Some helpful hints follow.

The four generic cuisines available in Seoul are Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and “western,” the later being defined mostly as American with some European. Korea, being a peninsula, consumes an abundant variety of “products from the sea, fields, and mountains.” The most distinguishing feature of the Korean food is its spiciness. The basic seasonings - red pepper, green onion, soy sauce, bean paste, garlic, ginger, sesame, mustard, and vinegar wine have been combined in various ways to enhance Korean foods.

Tipping is not required, not expected, and can sometimes elicit an unexpected and frantic response from the server who finds it on the table or whose hands you place it into. There is no need to tip at restaurants.

There are enough “western” restaurants to keep the finicky and culinary cautious well-fed. It is a typical routine of new expatriates to identify a few of these upon arrival and then slowly begin experimenting with the local dishes. If you don’t like spicy food, identify them quickly.

Restaurants come in a great variety from inexpensive, family-run, limited choice shops to expensive, gourmet, and elaborate facilities. Numerous, small community Korean-food restaurants are conveniently located in every residential and business community in Seoul and it is not unusual to find menu items for as little as 2,000 Won (\$2). Numerous western and Korean fast food restaurants exist in great numbers in Seoul (McDonalds, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Dominos Pizza, KFC, Wendy’s, Subway, Dunkin Dounuts, etc.). In the mid-range there are numerous Korean restaurants in addition to western family style restaurants (TGIF, Bennigans, Outback, Skylark, Toni Romas, Sizzler, Chili’s, etc.). Expensive restaurants can be found in the more business-oriented neighborhoods and the more chic districts in Seoul. English menus are not always available, especially in the smaller Korean restaurants. Some menus will list the name of the item in English, but not the ingredients. It is not uncommon for pictures to be included on menus or restaurant walls and windows and some restaurants have plastic models advertising their main dishes in their windows and entrances to which you can point to indicate what you want, then stare at, with pleading eyes, very hungrily. If

you are a vegetarian or practice some other form of alternative eating preference, it is possible to find vegetarian dishes, but as mentioned, determining ingredients will not be easy. Discovering new foods, and ordering them, can be an adventure in any country, and Korea is no exception.

When eating and drinking with Koreans in a group in a traditional Korean setting, realize that food and drink is served communal style, as is the check, although if there is a defined host, he typically picks up the bill. In more formal groups, food is taken by you with chopsticks from its serving platter and placed on a small dish in front of you before eating. The fact that you use the same chopsticks to repetitively do both is not an issue with Koreans. When with more intimate friends, it is not uncommon for food to be taken from the serving platter directly to the gullet. If hygiene is a concern with you, eat alone!

Do not spear your food with your chopsticks; it is the equivalent of stabbing your food and eating it with a knife in western societies. Do not stick your chopsticks into your bowl of rice and leave them standing there. This is solemnly associated with death as Buddhist custom often calls for food, rice being very traditional in Asian societies, to be placed at family alters in their homes and shops as offerings to deceased ancestors ready to eat, e.g., the rice with the chopsticks standing in the rice to assist the, often less nimble, ancestral spirits. Do not pour your own beer or other alcoholic beverage; this is considered rude and selfish. Allow others to pour it for you. If you don't want to drink too much, don't. The fact that your small glass is full of beer at the end of the evening (preventing someone from pouring you more) is a sign that you are satisfied. If you do not wish to waste food or precious beverage, let it sit there full until the end of the night and then finish it before you leave. Otherwise, any time you empty your glass, it is likely to be filled. Eating is less an individual activity and more done as a member of a group in Asian society, and sharing is an important part of that mentality.

Drinking does not have the same stigma in Korea as it does in some western countries. In some instances, such as during business engagements, it is both expected and encouraged. Beers and distilled beverages are the most common items of choice familiar to western foreigners. Numerous western imports are available, but expensive. The Korean beer is ok and it is cheap. The national drink, soju, is widely popular, comes in a wide variety of qualities, readily available, and also inexpensive. There are a number of other interesting indigenous drinks to sample as well. If you are a wine drinker, good wines are becoming easy to find but when found they are usually expensive; however wine is beginning to become more affordable in the market. Numerous small pubs, called by their German reference "hoff" are on almost every busy corner and street and some not so busy. Western style bars are also available, especially in the entertainment and business districts. One word of warning: many of the hoffs and bars expect you to purchase snacks to go with your drinks and will serve and charge you for them whether or not you ask.

The opportunity for an active and exciting nightlife exists if you are willing to either frequent the local restaurants, hoffs, and bars; hang out at expensive western hotel bars; or get on the bus or subway to go to the entertainment districts. One of the benefits of living in a community with good public transportation and relatively cheap taxi fares, is that you can safely get home at night, regardless of whether or not you should have had that one last indulgence.

Itaewon is one such district located outside the main American military base in Seoul. It is a good place to go shopping during the day, have dinner in the evening and a few drinks at night. A word of warning: sentiments among some Koreans toward the American military in Seoul and Korea vary greatly. There are those on both sides who sometimes become involved in antagonistic behaviors in the bars and streets of Itaewon. The police are not always inclined to ask questions before putting an end to such altercations. Some of the "locals only" bars will not let westerners enter; conversely, some of the "western bars" will not let the locals (at least the local guys) enter. This said, Itaewon is a large market, well-managed and the problems are relatively small and infrequent. It is a useful market and entertainment district for foreigners and Koreans alike. There are a number of entertainment districts throughout Seoul that offer an alternative to Itaewon. One closer to home and more chic (read: exclusive and expensive) shopping and entertaining district attracting a younger clientele, located in Gangnam-gu, is Apjukjung. The area immediately surrounding Gangnam station is also quite lively.



Outdoor Activities

Seoul, and particularly the Bundang area where the main KIS campus is, is a fantastic area for outdoor activities. There are bike trails and hiking trails that allow travel other than by car. Many teachers hike on trails that keep the city scenes hidden for hours as they travel through forests. Many of the forest trails and creek-side bike trails have permanent exercise machines installed along the way for those who want to include a more rigorous workout with their hike or bike ride. There are hundreds of parks for children that are creative and well-equipped. In the winter, there are many ski areas close to the Seoul area and many staff ski regularly.

If you leave Seoul there are the mountains and national parks immediately surrounding it. Throughout Korea, hiking, nature watching, skiing or snowboarding, camping, fishing, picnicking, biking, and other escapes from the city crowds, traffic, and air are fairly common. Korea has a number of popular beaches with safe swimming. There are resort towns with natural hot springs, golf courses, horseback riding and other activities. The most famous resort and popular honeymoon spot is Jeju Island, which is located at the southern extremity of Korea. There is some cultural difference among the different regions in Korea just as there are differences between the city and rural areas within any large country. Travel within Korea is generally safe and interesting, relatively inexpensive and possible even without Korean language skills.

Other Activities

There are too many possibilities to list here. You can buy the travel guides and visit the Internet sites. Seoul has vast cultural traditions and there is plenty to do both in and outside of Seoul, too. As a city of 22 Million people, nearly any special interest group can be found. Few of our staff ever feel there is nothing to do; rather, they tend to feel there is too much to do!

Here are just a few examples. There are a number of markets and entertainment districts in Seoul already mentioned. Additionally, there are traditional and modern theaters, museums, historical villages, parks, language and cultural exchanges and clubs, historical sites, the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea) tour, amusement parks, water parks (the largest in the world), cinemas, malls, fitness centers, sports complexes, sports organizations, river walks, parks, martial arts centers (Taekwondo is the traditional national sport), palaces, temples, expatriate organizations, chat rooms, and more.

Emergencies

There are a number of emergency options for speakers of English. Many of the medical clinics and hospitals have English-speaking staff members available. Contact your embassy, Korean government websites, and KIS faculty for recommendations. When you register with your embassy or consulate, inquire if they offer translation services for their citizens' medical, legal, or other emergencies. KIS foreign teachers and staff have developed professional relationships with a number of clinics and doctors while in Seoul, so ask around when you arrive. It is not uncommon to find US educated and trained doctors, dentists, etc. in Seoul.

In case of an emergency, you can dial 119 anywhere in Korea. Fire, police (who will contact emergency medical services if needed), and natural disaster emergencies are covered by this number. The emergency center will trace the call, locate the whereabouts of the dialer and take appropriate action. Often 119 operators can understand basic English or can transfer you to a translator. If a detailed explanation needs to be given, if possible, you should find someone nearby who can explain the situation in Korean.

It's also a good idea to carry the phone numbers of your school administrator, embassy, Korean friend, and a colleague or two at KIS who has some experience in Seoul should you not be able to find immediate assistance and need help in an unfamiliar situation or emergency. It is also a good practice to carry a copy of your address with Korean translation in case you get lost.

Transportation

Public transportation comes in the usual forms and is generally safe, reliable, and easy to use. Typically, teachers travel in Seoul via public bus or subway, but sometimes taxi, sometimes by foot or bike. Taxis are readily available. The school also provides a bus to and from the schools to the main living areas or subway stations.

Road Safety

Traffic practices are a little different than in the U.S. but are entirely manageable. Laws exist and are not unlike those that exist in western, developed countries; however enforcement is not always strict. The most common cause of death for Koreans from ages 1 - 30 is auto accidents. Suffice it to say that caution, respect, common sense, and vigilance is needed with Seoul traffic.

Walking

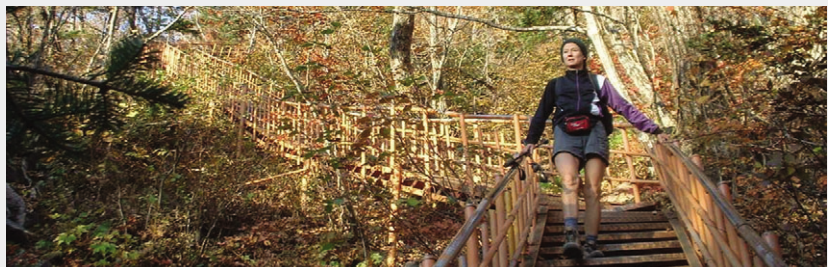
Walking on sidewalks can be an interesting experience. Sidewalks in Seoul are not solely for walking! They are also used for parking, setting up temporary food and shopping stalls, setting up mini-farmers' and other markets, setting up not-so-temporary service booths and kiosks, and alternative routes for scooter-driving, delivery boys, not to mention the occasional automobile. Scooters pose a real danger to newcomers as they often show little regard for the safety of the pedestrians in their way, even less regard for the law, and have a way of appearing out of nowhere. Please beware of this.

Biking

There are a number of bicycle paths, especially along the rivers and streams that run through parts of Seoul that provide for a safe and enjoyable ride. Many teachers ride their bikes to school.

Scooters

Scooters are a common means of transportation for delivery of fast foods and a wide variety of other goods. Any motorized bike under 50cc does not require a license. Scooter delivery drivers are a hazard to the uninitiated and sometimes to the initiated. Beware. They are not compelled to be bound by any laws or "common sense" that may exist to keep them off of the sidewalks, below the speed limit, driving in control, heading in the right direction, on the correct side of the street, stopping at red lights or intersections, having their lights on during darkness, windscreens cleared of map, looking in the direction that they are traveling, not talking on their cell phone or any other norms typically established for both their and pedestrians' safety. Nor are the police inclined to enforce such laws that do exist. The same applies to buses, but being bigger, they are easier to see and generally





speaking, stay off the sidewalks.

Buses

Buses run throughout the city and you can get almost anywhere using a combination of buses and subway lines. Around 400 bus lines extend to all corners of Seoul and its outer limits, employing about 8,500 city buses (2002). There are three types of city buses in Seoul - Regular Buses, City Express Buses, and Village Buses. Also there are privately owned limousine bus lines that operate from Incheon and Gimpo Airports to Seoul (City Air Terminal) and other popular destinations.

Although buses are all labeled with their respective line numbers and stops, only a few major stops are listed in English. It is advised that you research beforehand which number you must take to your destination. Inside each bus is a map displaying all its stops (again, only a few in English) and stops are usually broadcast in Korean, sometimes in English. The best way to know which bus goes where is to ask someone who knows. There are no reliable, easy-to-use English bus maps available. After the announcement of a stop, you must press a button (located on the walls, ceilings, and posts) in order to alert the bus driver that you wish to disembark. If there are no boarding or disembarking passengers, bus drivers often don't stop at designated stops.

Regular buses (Ilban Buses) generally come in yellow, white, and purple. These are the buses that you will typically use while in Seoul. Get on in the front, pay, ride, and get off using the rear door. Buses run from early morning to late night (currently 05:30AM-01:00AM). Adult's fare is ₩800 (2004). There is a discount if you use a Transportation Card. Hold on, these drivers are not known for their subtleness.

Village buses link residential areas that are far from major bus lines and subway stations or run only within specific communities. They are smaller than the Regular buses. Some only accept cash. They are normally cheaper than the regular buses.

Private limousine or tour buses take you to the airports and most of the major cities and tourist spots throughout Korea.

A word of warning to riders of city buses. Do not always expect the drivers of these buses to display the same courtesy or safety regards toward their passengers, as those you might be accustomed to. If you wish to catch a bus, you must flag it down or it may drive past. It is common for buses to stop three lanes from the curb and expect passengers to make their way through traffic to and from the bus despite other, not always sympathetic or law-abiding, traffic. Nor do they necessarily feel compelled to stop specifically at the designated loading area; they may be a short sprint before or after the stop, depending on the traffic and the mood of the driver. Always check for scooters before stepping toward the door or from the bus. Lastly, if you are waiting at a pedestrian crossing and the pedestrian crossing light turns green, with the corresponding traffic light turning red, do not expect Korean bus drivers to always abide by the law requiring them to stop at red lights nor the police to enforce such laws. The same applies to taxis, scooters, delivery trucks and other vehicles.

Subway

The subway system is extensive, safe, reliable and easy to use. Pick up a subway map in English at the information/ticket windows of most major subway stations or in the hotels and other facilities that cater to tourists. All stops are listed in Korean and English at each stop. The major lines often have the stops announced in English following the Korean announcement. Typically, maps in the subway stations and above the doors in the subway cars are in both Korean and English. Prepaid transportation cards are available and save time and effort when in a hurry or the ticket booth is busy. For a map see: <http://www.urbanrail.net/as/seoul/seoul.htm>



Seoul has eleven major subway lines with others under construction. For a map visit the Seoul Metropolitan Subway Corporation website at: <http://www.seoulmetro.co.kr/eng/>. Most subway stops have numbers (the first digit corresponding to the line number; the remaining two referring to the station number). Transfer stops are indicated using a three-color symbol (red, blue, gold). Price is determined by whether or not you travel within a zone (₩800) or between different zones (with a surcharge in addition to the 700 Won). Fares can be paid for in cash (to purchase individual trip tickets) or with Transportation Cards (recommended since they can be used on both public busses and the subway) or Subway Passes. Both can be bought at the service windows inside of major stations. Subways begin running as early as 05:30AM until as late as 01:00AM. Not all lines run this late. It is therefore advisable to check the schedules before making plans. Strikes and work stoppages are not unheard of, but are not typically a problem.

Transportation Cards

Transportation Cards (T-Money Cards) are very convenient and can be used on most regular buses (Ilban) and subways. Many taxis even have T-Money readers that allow your cab fare to be paid with your Transportation Card. They can be bought at subway station service windows and kiosks near bus stops. The cards come in ₩10,000 increments. When you first buy a card you must pay a refundable deposit (currently ₩1,500). These cards are rechargeable and can be recharged at locations where they are sold. They are time savers that allow you to avoid fighting in line to buy tickets (Koreans “cut”) at automated machines or station service windows.

Taxis

Taxis are easily identifiable and well regulated using meters to calculate fares. Tipping is not customary, but appreciated. If you are on a budget, avoid waving down “custom” taxis. There is little difference between “custom” versus other taxis, excepting the price and the polish. Most regular taxis are silver and white with blue signs. “Custom” taxis are more expensive and easily recognized, as they are typically painted black with yellow signs. Jumbo taxis may be ordered to ferry larger groups and people with lots of luggage. Some taxi drivers have limited English ability; most can recognize the names of famous landmarks and subway stations. It is a good idea to produce a map or write down the name of your destination to be handed to the driver, in Korean. Occasionally, you will find a taxi driver who speaks English quite well. Taxis are paid in cash. They run 24 hours a day.

Airports in Seoul

International flights leave from Incheon International Airport, which is roughly an hour away from Seoul’s City Air Terminal located next to the COEX mall, barring traffic, which is often a factor. This is the airport that you will most likely land at





when arriving in Korea. Most domestic flights leave from Gimpo airport located on the western outskirts of Seoul. There are airport express buss pick-up stops located throughout the city.

After arriving in Seoul and going through airport procedures you will find, immediately after exiting the international arrival terminal, a number of bus stops along the curb and a small ticket-selling booth. You can buy tickets for 12,000 Won (2008) to Bundang-gu or the Seoul City Air Terminal (Gangnam-gu). The CAT is only a 10-20 minute walk from where most teachers are currently housed. During your initial arrival, KIS normally provides transportation for new teachers and their luggage, so check with the business office prior to departure.

Traveling throughout Korea is inexpensive. If you have a plan to go out of town internationally or domestic, reserve tickets early, especially during the major holidays and school breaks. Reliable travel agencies are available in Seoul. Don't expect exact price quotes until a few weeks prior to departure, but reservations can easily be made well in advance.

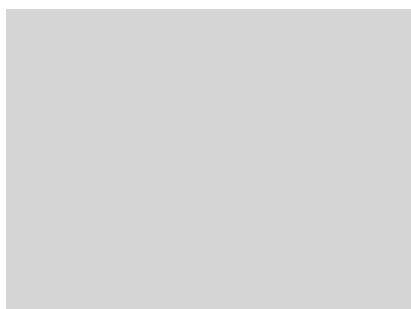
Ferries

There are numerous ferries that depart from major port cities that take you to local off shore locations or internationally to Japan and China.

Automobile Ownership and Rental

Car ownership by foreign national teachers is not the norm but is becoming more common. International Driver's Licenses are typically valid for one year from issue. Even if you are not intent on buying a car when you arrive, it is a good idea to procure an international drivers license before you arrive, should you intend to travel in Korea or other countries you may wish to visit from Korea. If intending to drive in Korea for a longer term, you must acquire a Korean Driver's License. Should you plan on obtaining a driver's license while in Korea, bring (or obtain after arrival) a translated, notarized driver's license issued in your county of origin, which you will need in addition to your passport and Certificate of Alien Registration. Depending on your country of origin, requirements may differ. US driver's licenses are typically accepted without question.

To rent a car in Korea, you must have at least one year of driving experience, have a valid International Driver's License, be over the age of 21, and have a valid passport.



SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON KOREA, SEOUL, AND BUNDANG-GU

The available sources of information regarding traveling to and living in Korea provide a wealth of information too vast to list here. To get an understanding of this, type “Korea” along with “travel, news, government, or culture” into your favorite search engine and follow the links. A few useful resources have been listed and/or paraphrased below. When links to websites are given, they will lead you to more extensive coverage of some of the topics that appear the text within this document. Such information includes, but is not limited to, overviews of history, geography, ecology and environment, climate, government and policies, economy, population, policies, society, culture and conduct, along with places to go, things to see and do, getting around, food and drink, entertainment, shopping, excursions, common Korean phrases, and much, much more. More importantly, information regarding visas, banking, taxes, alien registration, Korean law, utilities, bill paying, postal services, obtaining driving licenses, health considerations, keeping pets, and etiquette can also be found at these sites as well. This handbook is not meant to be a complete, comprehensive guide, however some of the more necessary and useful information has been consolidated for your use. You are encouraged to look elsewhere. This is a convenient starting point. Enjoy!

Commercially Produced Sources of Information

Travel Guides: A number of travel guides exist, but perhaps the most popular series that covers Korea is the Lonely Planet publications. They publish the two useful guides listed below:

Lonely Planet Korea

Lonely Planet Seoul

Either is extremely useful. If you are going to buy one, consider buying the Seoul guide since that is where you will be living and working and it will provide more detailed information about the city. If you expect to travel a lot within Korea during your stay you might consider buying both. These books are well worth the few dollars that they will cost and are conveniently sized to fit in a large pocket or pouch of a backpack. For more information visit the Lonely Planet website: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>, “click” on the “destinations” tab and let your fingers do the walking!

Phrase Books: Lonely Planet also produces a phrase book, as does Berlitz (which comes with a cassette tape):

Korean Phrase Book (Lonely Planet)

Korean Phrase Book and Dictionary (Berlitz)

The travel guides and phrase books listed in this section, if not available at your local bookstore, can be ordered through their websites or Amazon.com.

On-line English Language International and Korean Newspapers: It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the local (Korean) and international (especially East Asian) news. The Korean media mentioned below often includes sections on living in Korea, culture, government, economics, business, exchange rates, weather, activities, and links to other helpful sites.



International Herald Tribune (on-line): This is a reliable, globally recognized source of international news and has an easy-to-use currency converter. <http://www.iht.com>

JoongAng Daily (on-line): Probably the more respected of the Korean English-language newspapers, the IHT includes it as an insert. <http://joongangdaily.joins.com>

Korean Herald (on-line) Korean news in English. <http://www.koreaherald.co.kr>

Korea Times (on-line) Korean news in English. <http://times.hankooki.com>

US Government Sources of Information

Word Fact Book: Don't be spooked, but this CIA publication is perhaps the most reliable and up-to-date source of geopolitical statistics and facts regarding the Republic of Korea, commonly referred to as "South Korea" (and any other country that might be of interest). It is put out by the Central Intelligence Agency and is freely accessible via the Internet at the following URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

Embassy: It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with your country's embassy's location and contact information before arriving in Seoul. For American citizens, the US Embassy URL is: <http://seoul.usembassy.gov/>. The most useful page (not just for Americans) would be the American Citizen Services page found under the Visas/Services for Americans section found in the left margin of the homepage. As soon as you arrive in Seoul it is suggested that you register with you Embassy. In case of severe medical emergency, natural disaster or international emergency you need to be registered with your embassy in order to receive official information and assistance from it. US citizens can register on line once they know their address, phone number in Seoul and have their passport handy.

Coincidentally, the US Emergency Evacuation Plan found in the American Citizens Services page contains a lot of useful information on how to prepare for an emergency evacuation of Seoul and/or Korea in case of internal or international crisis. No one at KIS has ever had to undertake such an evacuation, however, the lists of important documents and essential items is a good guide of what type of paper work to bring with you to Korea in addition to the obvious, such as your passport. Check it out. Again, you don't have to be a US citizen to visit this site and gain from the information it contains.

Department of State (USA): The US Department of State official website at <http://www.state.gov/> contains a vast amount of travel and living abroad information and advice. Regardless of whether or not you are a US citizen, this is a useful site and it is recommended that you visit. Additionally, it will direct you to information regarding travel advisories, which can be useful when considering travel from Korea to other destinations during your vacations. The pages below can be accessed on-line and are provided in order to give you with convenient starting points.

“YOUR TRIP ABROAD”

Your Trip Abroad contains helpful tips on obtaining a passport, things to consider in preparing for your overseas trip, other resources for travel and customs information. To view this document, visit the following website: <http://travel.state.gov/yourtripabroad.html>.

“TIPS FOR AMERICANS RESIDING ABROAD”

Tips for Americans Residing Abroad will acquaint you with the wide range of services provided to American citizens by U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.

It can be viewed in its entirety at this site: http://travel.state.gov/law/info/info_2242.html.

Center for Disease Control (CDC): Another useful government sponsored source of information is the travel page of the official website of the Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> or you can visit the World Health Organization site at: <http://www.who.int/ith/>. Note: while both sites list malaria as a concern, it is only a problem in the northwest region of South Korea, outside of Seoul.

Korean Government Sources of Information

Korean government official web site: The official English language web site of the Korean government is maintained by the Korean Information Service and can be found at: <http://www.korea.net/>. Sections include News, Government, Economy, Learn About Korea, Dictionary, Culture, and Issues. Numerous official links regarding laws and regulations and services are to be found here as well. Included is a link to an interactive map of Seoul. You will more than likely live and work in Bundang-gu, which you will find south of the Han River (running generally east to west) slightly right of center.

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO): The KTO URL is: <http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto>. In addition to an abundance of Korean travel information, subway maps and descriptions of common Korean dishes are provided at this site.

Other Sources of Information

Hi Seoul: One more website maintained by the Seoul Metropolitan Government for “the overseas press, expatriates living in Seoul, and other foreigners” can be found at: <http://english.seoul.go.kr/index.html>. In addition to news and weather, you will find numerous guides including “daily living in Seoul, events, and language.” There are interactive maps and currency exchange rate listings.

Life in Korea: An all-encompassing website regarding travel, culture, activities, etc. in Korea is maintained by the travel website <http://www.lifeinasia.com/>, (useful if you plan to use your stay in Korea as a jumping off point for travel throughout Asia) and can be found at: <http://www.lifeinkorea.com/>.

Korea International School homepage: KIS has its own site at the following URL: <http://www.kis.or.kr/>. School information, admission requirements, curricular and extra-curricular program descriptions, staff introductions, the current copy of the KIS Communicator (newsletter), PTO page, and a school calendar are included.

Culture Shock and Adjustment



No matter how well you prepare or how travel-experienced you consider yourself to be, culture shock is a real possibility.

The following passage has been copied from: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm>.

The term, culture shock, was introduced for the first time in 1958 to describe the anxiety produced when a person moves to a completely new environment. This term expresses the lack of direction, the feeling of not knowing what to do or how to do things in a new environment, and not knowing what is appropriate or inappropriate. The feeling of culture shock generally sets in after the first few weeks of coming to a new place.

Culture shock can be described as the physical and emotional discomfort one suffers when coming to live in another country or a place different from the place of origin. Often, the way that we lived before is not accepted as or considered as normal in the new place. Everything is different, for example, not speaking the language, not knowing how to use banking machines, not knowing how to use the telephone, what foods to order, and so forth.

The symptoms of cultural shock can appear at different times. Although, one can experience real pain from culture shock; it is also an opportunity for redefining one's life objectives. It is a great opportunity for learning and acquiring new perspectives. Culture shock can make one develop a better understanding of oneself and stimulate personal creativity.

Symptoms

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy
- Preoccupation with health
- Aches, pains, and allergies
- Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- Changes in temperament, depression, feeling vulnerable, feeling powerless
- Anger, irritability, resentment, unwillingness to interact with others
- Identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country
- Loss of identity
- Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country
- Unable to solve simple problems
- Lack of confidence
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Developing stereotypes about the new culture
- Developing obsessions such as over-cleanliness
- Longing for family
- Feelings of being lost, overlooked, exploited or abused

Stages of Culture Shock

Culture shock has many stages. Each stage can be ongoing or appear only at certain times. The first stage is the incubation stage. In this first stage, the new arrival may feel euphoric and be pleased by all of the new things encountered. This time is called the "honeymoon" stage, as everything encountered seems new and exciting.

Afterwards, the second stage presents itself. A person may encounter some difficult times and crises in daily life. For example, communication difficulties may occur such as not being understood. In this stage, there may be feelings of discontent, impatience, anger, sadness, and feeling incompetence. This happens when a person is trying to adapt to a new culture that is very different from the culture of origin. Transition between the old methods and those of the new country is a difficult process and takes time to complete. During the transition, there can be strong feelings of dissatisfaction.

The third stage is characterized by gaining some understanding of the new culture. A new feeling of pleasure and sense of humor may be experienced. One may start to feel a certain psychological balance. The new arrival may not feel as lost and starts to have a feeling of direction. The individual is more familiar with the environment and wants to belong. This initiates an evaluation of the old ways versus those of the new.

In the fourth stage, the person realizes that the new culture has good and bad things to offer. This stage can be one of double integration or triple integration depending on the number of cultures that the person has to process. This integration is accompanied by a more solid feeling of belonging. The person starts to define him/herself and establish goals for living.

The fifth stage is the stage that is called the “re-entry shock” or “reverse culture shock.” This occurs when a return to the country of origin is made. One may find that things are no longer the same. For example, some of the newly acquired customs are not in use in the old culture. It can be as simple as not knowing the names of new songs or movies and therefore seeming “behind” in your own culture.

These stages are present at different times and each person has their own way of reacting in the stages of culture shock. As a consequence, some stages will be longer and more difficult than others. Many factors contribute to the duration and effects of culture shock. For example, the individual’s state of mental health, type of personality, previous experiences, socio-economic conditions, familiarity with the language, family and/or social support systems, and level of education.

Adjusting to Culture Shock

The majority of individuals and families that migrate from other countries have the ability to positively confront the obstacles of a new environment. Some ways to combat stress produced by culture shock are:

BE PREPARED

Develop a hobby

Don't forget the good things you already have!

Remember, there are always resources that you can use

Be patient, the act of immigrating is a process of adaptation to new situations. It is going to take time

Learn to be constructive. If you encounter an unfavorable environment, don't put yourself in that position again. Be easy on yourself.

Don't try too hard.

Learn to include a regular form of physical activity in your routine. This will help combat the sadness and loneliness in a constructive manner. Exercise, swim, take an aerobics class, etc.

Relaxation and meditation are proven to be very positive for people who are passing through periods of stress

Maintain contact with your ethnic group. This will give you a feeling of belonging and you will reduce your feelings of loneliness and alienation

Maintain contact with the new culture. Learn the language. Volunteer in community activities that allow you to practice the language that you are learning. This will help you feel less stress about language and useful at the same time.

Allow yourself to feel sad about the things that you have left behind: your family, your friends, etc.

Recognize the sorrow of leaving your old country. Accept the new country. Focus your power on getting through the



transition.

Pay attention to relationships with your family and at work. They will serve as support for you in difficult times.

Establish simple goals and evaluate your progress.

Find ways to live with the things that don't satisfy you 100%.

Maintain confidence in yourself. Follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future.

If you feel stressed, look for help.

Jet Lag: Jet lag refers to the disruption of sleep patterns and other circadian rhythms (the body's internal clock) caused by crossing multiple time zones in a short period of time, e.g. when flying east west or west east. The adverse effects of jet lag may lead to indigestion, general malaise, insomnia, and reduced physical and mental performance. One rule of thumb is it takes one day for every time zone you travel to make a full adjustment.

The following passage was copied from the World Health Organization site.

There are useful strategies for reducing the effects of jet lag (see below). Travelers who take medication according to a strict timetable (e.g. insulin, oral contraceptives) should seek medical advice.

General measures to reduce the effects of jet lag:

Be well rested before departure and have as much rest as possible during the flight, including short naps. Ensure the same total amount of sleep in every 24 hours when traveling as when staying at home.

Drink plenty of water and/or juices before and throughout the flight.

Eat light meals and limit consumption of alcohol before and during the flight.

Short-acting sleeping pills may be helpful in assisting the adjustment of sleeping, but should be used only in accordance with medical advice.

* Melatonin, at present available in very few countries (sold, but not approved by the Food and Drug Administration, in the USA) is used by some travelers to resynchronize the body's internal clock although its benefit is unproven and side-effects unknown.

Numerous websites contain a greater variety of strategies to deal with jet lag. Type "jet lag" into your favorite search engine to get a sample.

Acclimatization: Acclimatization is the manner in which an organism adapts to a new environment or to a change in the old. If you are coming to Korea from a different climate or similar climate at a different stage (northern vs. southern hemisphere) you may find that in addition to Jet Lag you will suffer physical stress due to acclimatization factors. Generally speaking the best way to adjust to a new climate is allow your body the time it needs to adapt or acclimatize. While different individuals will acclimatize at different rates, depending on a number of variables (health, fitness, stress, rest, effects of jet lag, diet, etc.), it typically takes the body two to four weeks to acclimatize.



Gaepo Campus

155-1 Gaepo-dong
Gangnam-gu, Seoul
135-240, Korea

Pangyo Campus

373-6 Baekhyun-dong
Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si
Gyeonggi-do, 463-420, Korea

Jeju Campus

Jeju Global Education City
Daejeong-eup, Seogwipo-si
Jeju-do, Korea